796 Timbira SO8

/Since the author regards almost all organized ceremonial as secular, ceremonies are to be found under category 527. For ceremonies in general see category 116,- pp. 163-230./

1: Nimuendaju E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SOS Timbira SOS

241 412 section is clearly set off from the round part. The Eastern Timbira term for this implement, pĩčwapo, means "sharp, flat wood." In probing for tubers, especially for sweet potatoes, these farmers use a special pointed stick some 40 cm. in length, which is often derived from the end of a worn-out bow. These two are the only native agricultural implements that persist in contemporary use in Ponto.

242 Except for rice and bitter manioc, plants of one species rarely occupy one continuous major strip, the general practice being to dispose them in patches here and there or mixed with other crops.

243 177 Among Timbira cultivated plants, maize holds the place of honor, being the only one whose origin is explained by a myth. Though Ribeiro mentions only two indigenous varieties,[187] the Rąmkõ'kamekra raise four kinds of small-kerneled maize which they derive from the legendary Star maiden, Kaččkwę'i, viz. 1, põhĩpéy, true or good maize, with small, white, and very soft kernels; 2, põhĩyaká, white maize, somewhat larger, but otherwise similar; 3, põhĩkreakáre, with small blue kernels; and 4, to'rómre, with black kernels of medium size. The large-kerneled varieties, põhĩti, are additions from the Neobrazilians.

243 221 805 The appearance of the Pleiades (krot) after sunset on the western horizon is a harbinger of the rainy season and indicates the need for starting a clearing in order to plant at the first rainfall. This ushers in the meipimrą'k period (p. 84), roughly coterminous with the rainy season since it ends with the commencement of the maize harvest.

243 624 796 *Horticultural rites.*—A man named Võkrãkę', whose maternal home is on the east side of the village circle, is charged with ceremonially opening the planting as well as the harvesting of maize. On the former occasion there figures a small gourd bowl whose edge is painted with urucú and which is filled with maize kernels. Võkrãkę' takes this container to the plaza and sets it on the ground, where people dance around it. Then he takes the bowl to his wife's plot and plants the maize, whereupon others are free to follow his example. After this functionary's death his office descends to the matrilineal kinsman to whom he has transferred his name.

243 782 796 When the maize stands about 1 m. high, another ceremony is held in order to induce the Moon, Pụduvrį, to ward off noxious animal parasites from the plants. Clapping together their hands and singing "Pụduvrįre kayẽ'yẽ' rivahá vaká mopó tu krére," all the villagers of both sexes then slowly dance in the plaza on a full-moon night, moving from the north southward under the leadership of a precentor wielding his rattle. In the rainy season they fear a lunar eclipse even far more than during the dry period, for they think it would destroy the crops. The relevant ceremonies will be described later.

776 782 In case of drought, however, not the Moon, but the Sun, Pụt, is addressed. Three old men then march round the boulevard, singing "kedeti/ĩmãpéy/vayakrį' (Grandfather [= sun],/be good to me and/gladden me [by rain])."

796 624 243 No one—not even the woman owning the plot—is free to eat of the crop until the councilors have tasted of it and declared it mature. The maize harvest is opened by the same man, Võkrãkę', who inaugurated the planting season. First, a hunting party leaves to secure meat for the village. When they return with game, Võkrãkę' asks his wife to fetch from the plots a carrying basket full of maize ears, which are husked and cooked into meat pies to be served to the councilors in the plaza. Of the husks Võkrãkę' makes some twenty shuttlecocks, which his son Rąrą'k takes to the plaza and throws, one by one, into the circle of players. These throw each ball toward one another with the palm of the hand as long as possible without per-

[187] Memoria, § 11.

1: Nimuendaju E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SO8 Timbira SO8

lower end pointed on the sword-club pattern; the upper end, which is sometimes decorated with openwork over a span in length and often very prettily, terminates in comblike tines 4–6 cm. long (pl. 36). A soft sound is produced by moistening the skin on the inside of the upper arm with the tongue and stroking it back and forth with the tines. This sound is the signal by which the pepyé identify themselves on mutual visits at night.

A second object often found in the hands of pepyé, but otherwise only rarely (as a children's toy), is the bull-roarer (pīkwęk) (pl. 35, *e*). After nightfall and before daybreak the class leader should swing the instrument, the alarm being passed on from cell to cell to make sure that its inmate has not fallen asleep, in which case the commandant would punish him. This was the subsequent statement of the commandant who had functioned in 1933, but during that festival the signal was certainly not given with regularity, but at best now and then. As a participant I only occasionally heard the booming sound for a few moments and did not learn its meaning until later. Once I overheard the following dialogue between two pepyé, which the commandant's explanation elucidates: "Did you hear my bull-roarer this noon?" "Yes!" "I thought you were asleep."

That the bull-roarer was part of the insignia peculiar to pepyé is indicated by the term pepyetokárčą in the speech of the Čą'kamekra, nowadays extinct as a separate tribe, whose specimens were considerably larger and of more careful make than their present Rąmkõ'kamekra equivalents. It seems clear that the comparative insignificance of the bull-roarer at initiation does not represent its original role.

A pepyé in retreat carefully extends the lobes of his ears to fit them for the earplugs (kúi) (see pl. 4, *a–c*). From time to time the youths widen this part of the ear, which is developed into a loop of skin, by inserting both their forefingers and then twisting the loop; at intervals of a few days the plugs are superseded by new and somewhat bigger ones.

The deputy daily notched a four-edged stick (amkrópupunčą, day counter) to keep tally of the days elapsed since the capture of the pepyé (pl. 35, *g*).

The pepyé passed the time with various diversions: one of them constructed a ventilator wheel, another carved a model of the type of motorboat plying on the Mearim, still others plaited little baskets, bags or mats of anajá grass, which they used in their subsequent parades and camps.

Sometimes when the village lacked meat, the pepyé furtively marched into the steppe to hunt. On one trip they stole a neighboring farmer's ox; the council by no means sanctioned this procedure, but had the errand boys bring the two chief malefactors to the plaza and gave them a terrific reprimand, so that they stood there quite abashed, notwithstanding the supercilious bearing at first assumed by one of the culprits. At night, before all their fellow novices, the two commandants once more subjected them to prolix harangues and reprimands.

Thus the weeks passed. In the meantime the wakõ'kama, being the youngest of the eastern classes and hence the novices' opponents, gathered daily in the western vụ'tẹ''s house and arranged many log races with the next older põhị'kama class camped on the west side. These latter, using the eastern vụ'tẹ' house as their lodge, belong to the same team league as the pepyé of 1933, whose subsequent position would also be on the west side of the plaza, to the north of their predecessors on that side.

Inspection of new leaders.—About 4:30 P.M. on May 23, the põhị'kama and wakõ'kama classes (western and eastern, respectively) began to dance jointly in the plaza, while the hąpín and pinčwẹ'i of the eastern leader of the pepyé assembled

1: Nimuendaju E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SO8 Timbira SO8

Their public cult performances may be counted on the fingers of one hand, and several years elapsed before I discovered a private act unrelated to animism.

The Sun and Moon myth of the Eastern Timbira greatly resembles that of the Apinayé[25] and Šerénte. I heard it not only among the Rąmkõ'kamekra, but also wholly or in part among the Pụkóbye, Kre'pụ'mkateye, Krẽyé of Bacabal, and the Krahõ'. Both characters are conceived as male and as unrelated to each other. In Rąmkõ'kamekra myth they create mankind by diving in a brook, in a Pụkóbye variant, from bottle gourds in a plantation; but in none of the other six episodes of the myth do they in any way work for the benefit of humanity. Nevertheless the Rąmkõ'kamekra regard themselves as primarily dependent on the Sun (Pụt) and in much lesser degree also on the Moon (Pụduvrí).

The purpose of all the general cult performances is to invoke the heavenly bodies to protect food plants and animals. These acts comprise prayers to the Sun for rain (p. 62), for protection of game animals (p. 71), and on behalf of wild fruits (p. 72); and to the Moon to prosper the crops when maize has grown to about 3 feet in height (p. 62).

On the other hand, there was no trace of religion at the maize-planting ceremony (p. 62), nor was the hõčwá ceremony on behalf of the sweet-potato crop at all related to Sun and Moon worship, though it does bear a magical significance (p. 63).

During the entire period of my stay I witnessed only two instances of a person's supplicating the Sun. The first time a young woman was praying for a child (p. 130); the second time I heard a mother instructing her approximately seven-year-old son, who had been ill for a long time, to invoke the Sun as follows: "Kédeti! Iymą̃ ampõ'no, vatoekũne iypey! (Grandfather! Give me a remedy so that I'll recover!)" Further, I learnt that, when putting the mats soiled at the delivery into the fork of a steppe tree, the mother of a lying-in woman supplicates the Sun, as stated (p. 106), to protect the newborn infant.

The prayers have no fixed text, the suppliant addressing the Sun spontaneously as though conversing with an ordinary person. Thus some address him as pa'pám, Our Father; others as Kédeti, Grandfather. I have never heard of any Rąmkõ'kamekra seeing Sun or Moon in dreams or visions.

There is little knowledge of the course of the heavenly bodies. Time is reckoned by lunar phases and by seasons (rainy and dry). They do not know how many full moons there are in a year, being handicapped by their aboriginal number system, which does not go beyond four. They do not ponder the nature of the solar body. They know approximately where the sun rises and sets during the wet and the dry season, but they do not empirically determine the solstice or use it in time reckoning.

The younger age classes, regularly assembled in the plaza at sunset, always consider it fun to expect the appearance of the new moon, each youth vying with the rest to discover it first. As soon as it is detected, everybody raises his hands and utters piercing shouts "to give pleasure to the Moon."

The moon spots are explained in Rąmkõ'kamekra myth (p. 244) and somewhat differently by the Krẽyé of Bacabal.[26] No explanation was obtained for the lunar phases.

A lunar eclipse is called pụduvrį hitįk, that is, dying of the moon. In 1935 I witnessed one and went purposely to the plaza to sleep there. Since the sky was somewhat clouded, the Indians did not notice what was going on until the darkening

[25] Nimuendajú, The Apinayé, 158.
[26] Nimuendajú, Vokabular und Sagen der Crengés.